

12574

886

THE
NATURE *and* CONSEQUENCES
OF
ENTHUSIASM,
DEFENDED;

Against the Reflections of the Reverend
Mr. SAMUEL FANCOURT *in* his Essay
concerning *Certainty and Infallibility.*

In a SECOND
LETTER
To Mr. TONG, Mr. ROBINSON,
Mr. SMITH, and Mr. REYNOLDS.

By the Author of the Letter of Enthusiasm.

L O N D O N:

Morgan

Printed and Sold by J. ROBERTS in *Warwick*
Lane. M DCC XX.

[Price Six-Pence.]

THE
MATURE AND CONSEQUENCES
OF
ENTHUSIASM,
DEFENDED;

Against the Reflections of the Reverend
Mr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, in his Essay
concerning Enthusiasm and Mysticism.

IN A SECOND

LETTER



To Mr. T. ROBINSON,
MR. SMITH, and MR. F. EXNOLDS.

By the Author of the Letter of Enthusiasm.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by J. ROBERTS in Warwick
Lane. MDCCX.

[Printed by Robert]

Second LETTER

Mr. TONG, Mr. ROBINSON,
Mr. SMITH, and Mr. RETNOLDS.

GENTLEMEN,

THE *Doctrine of the blessed Trinity* stated and defended, came out with such an Air of Assurance, and appear'd to me so directly calculated to discourage all rational Freedom of Enquiry in Matters of great Importance; to bear down the clearest Evidence, and the most express Declarations of Holy Scripture, by the contrary Weight of Human Authority; to prejudice the Judgments, and inflame the Passions of the People, by giving the Signal, and raising a groundless Outcry of Heresy against your innocent Brethren; and in a Word, to distract and divide the Protestant dissenting Churches, in laying a Foundation for implicit Faith, and encouraging Dissenters to act upon the very fundamental Principle of *Papery*; that is, to hold fast their Opinions without any farther Examination, and to believe Contradictions, under the vain and senseless Pretext of opposing Faith to Reason; that I thought my self obliged to expose this Proceedure with some Degree of

A 2 Sharp.

Sharpness, to prevent, if possible, the Mischiefs which I saw arising from such Sort of Management.

I do not say that you design'd all, or any thing of this, for I believe the contrary; but I cannot help saying, that this then appear'd to me the natural Tendency, as it has since proved the real Consequence of your Book, and of your whole Conduct in this Affair from first to last.

When you had stated the Question relating to the Trinity in one main Proposition, upon which you have thought fit to lay so mighty a Stress as the Salvation of Souls, and the whole Business of Christian Charity, Peace, and Communion, you declared your Resolution *to contend earnestly for it against all Opposers*, p. 18. Whether in that Declaration you proceeded on the Presumption that no Body would dare oppose you, I cannot say; but really, *Gentlemen*, you must give me leave to say, that after such a Declaration, and all that has been said against you from so many Hands, your long Silence in this Cause is a little surprizing; and indeed I know not how to account for it, unless I should suppose it owing to certain Convictions that you have carried the Matter a little too far, and have advanced something that is not very defensible.

The great Things you have promised, or threatned rather, seem after all to be dwindled into *an Essay concerning Certainty and Infallibility, or some Reflections upon the Nature and Consequences of Enthusiasm considered*; which the Author as your Defender directs

in a Letter to me. I have chosen to direct my Thoughts upon his Performance in a Letter to you, rather than to the Author of the *Reflections*, for these two Reasons; *first*, because you are the Principals in this Debate; and *secondly*, because I would lay you under some Obligation to defend your selves more effectually than this Writer has done, or I fear is like to do.

Without any farther Apology therefore for the Presumption of troubling you with a second Letter, I shall proceed to examine Mr. *Fancourt's* Reasonings, and to shew wherein I think he falls short of what he promises, and how far I apprehend you are concerned, either to appear in your own Defence, or look out for one that is more able to defend you.

The Author in his Preface takes Care to acquaint the Publick with the special Motives, which induced him to appear as my Adversary and your Defender in this Controversy; and tho' he seems to doubt whether the Reasons he assigns will sufficiently excuse him, yet he presumes he shall at least be deem'd the more excusable, on the Account of the special Relation he has the Honour to stand in to three of you; one having been his Tutor, another his Predecessor in the Place he removed from, and a third the Minister principally concern'd in his Ordination. Thus he has founded his special Attempt upon three special Relations, which perhaps had never been heard of before, and I suppose will not be understood now. The Relation of Master and Scholar, while the mutual Obligation of teaching and learning continues, is something intelligible; but

but when that Obligation ceases, I think the Relation must cease with it, and the Disciple may become the Master ; and what special Relation should arise between two Ministers, who happen to succeed each other at a considerable Interval of Time, to the Charge of a particular Congregation, I cannot see ; unless *his Predecessor help'd him to the Place, and then the Obligation is visible, tho' the Relation will be still to seek.* Alike mysterious is the special Relation constituted between the Ordainer and the Person ordained ; and tho' this must be allow'd to have been a piece of Service, yet I cannot imagine wherein the very peculiar Obligation of it should lie, unless one was at Liberty to suppose (what is not true in the present Case) that if the Gentleman who befriended him with his Assistance in that Affair had not done it, no Body else would ; so that 'tis evident that this Gentleman by Relation means Obligation, and by his Relatives his Benefactors.

But he needed not have gone so far to fetch Reasons for attacking me, since that is what every one had an equal Right to who thought me in the wrong. It had been sufficient for him to have said, that he look'd upon the Cause he espoused to be just, that he thought a Defence of it necessary, and apprehended himself capable in some Measure of defending it. But I am sorry he should insist only upon these poor worldly Inducements, and carnal Motives ; a Respect to Persons, Obligations receiv'd, and the like ; which ought to be of no Consideration or Weight at all with us in our Enquiries after Truth.

Mr.

Mr. *Fancourt* having thus declared the weighty Reasons which engaged him in this War, and told the World that he took up Arms in Defence of his Relations, addresses himself to me; and what seems to be the main Design of his Book, is, to shew the vast Esteem he has for you, his *near and dear Relations and Benefactors*, and how angry he is with me for presuming to write against you. For my part, I did not know that Mr. *Fancourt* stood in any such near Relation, or that he was under any such peculiar Obligations to you; tho' if I had, perhaps I might not have spared any thing I have said.

He begins by comparing the Spirit of the two Books; and here he takes Occasion to say the best things he can of you, and the worst of me; had I a Mind to make Reprials upon him, I might here spend three or four Pages in comparing his Manner and Way of Writing, his Language and Stile in some Parts of his Essay, with that of an ingenious sort of Disputants in low Life, who in strict Justice to their Arguments are usually left to the Conviction of a Cold Bath; but the Reader, I dare say, will excuse me this Trouble, since every one must see that his Railery is insipid, as well as unmannerly; and that it is not without Reason that he declares his mortal Enmity to Wit.

I shall say nothing directly to his Reflections upon my Title Page, because I hope to make it appear, that his whole Book is a Justification of it. As for this Author and some others, who, as he seems inclinable to think,

think, are not like to be disappointed as I was, in your *Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity stated and defended*, I do not in the least envy them the Satisfaction they may take in the Certainty of indubitable Perswasion; I desire only they would be so good as to suffer me to make the Evidence of Things, as it appears to my own Understanding, the Ground of my Perswasion.

What he next insists upon is my Notion of *Sincerity*; and indeed he talks of it as if he had never heard the Word before, or knew not what is meant by it. He seems willing to make his Reader believe that those who make so much ado about Sincerity in this Affair, would shut Truth out of their Account; as if it was a thing indifferent, or at least not necessary, whether Men be in the Right, or hold the Truth in any Case whatever or not, provided they do but act according to their *real Perswasion*, and think they are in the Right: He would have it thought that I have set up for Sincerity without Truth, and supposes that I not only wish for, but think I see the Dawn of such a glorious Day, when none but a *Papist* shall maintain, that there is any one Truth in the whole Gospel indispensably necessary by the Covenant of Grace to be believed in order to Salvation; and goes on to represent as a Consequence of what I have said about Sincerity, *that a Man might renounce Christianity and worship the Hosts of Heaven, if not the Devil too, and yet have a rational Confidence towards God, had he but the good Luck to be sincere in such his Renunciation and Worship*, p. 8, 9. I dare say Mr. Fancourt

is better acquainted with the Practice of Sincerity, than he seems to be with the Nature of it; which I always understood to be a Man's acting up steadily to what appears to his own Understanding to be most just and reasonable, or most agreeable to the Mind and Will of God, *after a strict and impartial Examination*: He who makes the best Use he can of his rational Faculties in examining the Grounds and Reasons of what he receives and embraces for Truth, is sincere in his Enquiries; and he who acts according to his Judgment after he has taken all the Care he can to inform it right, by an impartial Examination, is sincere in his Practice; and both these are necessary to denominate the Person sincere. Now where any Truth, which concerns our Duty to God, and the Way to Salvation, is so evident in it self, or so clearly contained in the Christian Revelation, that a sincere Enquirer, or one who examines the Matter impartially, cannot miss it; in all such Cases the Truth will be as necessary, equally and as indispensibly necessary, as Sincerity; because it will have a necessary inseperable Connexion with, and Dependence on Sincerity it self: But where the Truth is so difficult in it self, or so obscurely revealed, that a sincere Enquirer may not be able to reach it; in this case the Truth, whatever it be in it self, or in its own abstract Nature, can be of no Necessity or Importance to the Person; but God will accept of his sincere Endeavours to know and do his Will, and not punish him for his involuntary and unavoidable Mistakes; for surely God will

will not call Men to an account for any Talents which he had never put into their Hands: And tho' fallible passionate Men may boldly usurp the Prerogative of the Almighty, and set up their own Judgments and Apprehensions of Things, even in the most doubtful and difficult Cases; as the Rule and Standard of Truth and Fallhood, Right and Wrong; yet certainly God will not, in his most righteous Judgment, condemn any Man for not knowing what he could not possibly know, or for not believing what, after *his utmost Enquiries, and the best use he could make of his Faculties*, he thus could see no reason to believe.

Having thus stated the Case, I think the Author's Objections confute themselves; for to make good his Consequences against my Principle of Sincerity, he must shew, that an Impartial Enquirer, *after the best use he can make of his rational Faculties*, may yet see sufficient Reasons to Renounce his Christianity, or to Worship the Hosts of Heaven; and he must shew that tho' God and the Devil are two opposite Masters, and tho' all their Commands and Injunctions are directly contrary to each other, that for a Man to *Worship* the Devil, and have at the same time a *Rational* Confidence towards God, is not a direct Contradiction; or he must shew that a Man who is capable of discovering the Being and Existence of the Devil, is not yet capable, *upon his sincere Enquiries, or the best Use he can make of his Faculties*, to discover the Being and Existence of a God above the Devil. But this Writer seems unhappily resolv'd to distin-

stinguish himself in the way of Trifling beyond all that have gone before him, and therefore cannot satisfy himself with common Absurdities.

And here I may take occasion to explain to him, better than he has done it for me, what that Time is which I hope and pray for. I long then for the Time when the Sophistry of such sort of Reasoning, as he has here given us a Sample of, shall be more generally understood and exploded; when Bigotry and Enthusiasm shall give Place to Charity, and a rational Freedom of Enquiry; when the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel shall no longer be put to such poor Shifts to free themselves from the direct Claim of Infallibility, and when those who disclaim it in Words, shall do so in Reality and Truth; when Men shall no longer affront and mock the Almighty, by complementing his Word as the only Rule of their Faith, while they substitute their own Words instead of it, and pretend that the Word of God is not particular, express, or clear enough, *even in things necessary*, 'till they have explain'd and improved the Revelation; when nothing shall be pretended as necessary to Christian Peace and Unity, but what Christ has made necessary to Salvation; and in a word, I long for the glorious Day, when the Christian People shall be admitted to the Communion of Saints and be allow'd all the Benefits and Privileges of the Christian Dispensation, upon Scripture Terms. This is the Time and State of things I hope and pray for, and this

the happy Day I earnestly wish, at least to see the Dawn of.

If this be *the very Dregs of Paganism*, then it must be allow'd that this Writer has given a just and fair Representation of me, and of this whole Affair: But if all this is nothing else but his own Mistake; if he shall appear not at all to have read and consider'd what has been said by the best Writers upon this Subject, and if he shall be found only to have trifled where he ought to have been most open and sincere; if this, I say, should be the Case, as I imagine it will, I must leave the World about us to judge of the strength of that Cause which needs such Supports. And however the Author may please himself, and some of his particular Friends, by this way of talking, yet I cannot but say that I should have thought this manner of Reasoning here wholly inexcusable, had he not so honestly given the World to understand, in his Preface, that he enter'd the Lists in this Controversy from the particular Love and Gratitude he bears to you.

Your affectionate Defender entertains his Reader almost every where with loud and bitter Complaints of my having treated you with an unworthy Disrespect, and exposed you to Ridicule and Contempt: It was ever my Opinion that the Truth ought not to suffer from any Respect to Persons, and that where Men's common Religious Interests are concern'd, all Mankind are upon a Level, as having all the same Right to speak out, tho' by reason of the Terrors of this World they have not always the same Liberty; but for
my

my own part I shall still think my self at liberty to represent the Defects and Inconsistencies of an Adversary's Reasoning in the clearest Light I can ; and if when they are stript of their artificial Colourings and Disguises they should happen to appear ridiculous, in a plain *English* Dress, the Fault is none of mine. If this therefore be the true Ground of the Complaint, as I suspect it is, I must be content to bear the Imputation, unless he will be so good as to pardon me without Repentance ; and if by treating you rudely, and exposing you to Ridicule and Contempt, he means, exposing the Weakness and Insufficiency of your Scheme, and way of Talking, I fear I shall incur the same Censure in replying to him.

I shall now consider what the Author has offered by way of Argument, relating to *Certainty* and *Infallibility*, and the Mistakes and Misapplications he thinks I have made about it. I shall postpone the great Charge of having abused and misrepresented you, by forcing upon you the Consequences of an *Infallibility* which you never pretended to ; I say, I shall postpone this high Charge to the last place, because it will appear in a clearer Light, when I have examined what your Defender has made of *his* *Certainty* and *Infallibility*, as he would be thought to differ from *me*.

Before I proceed farther, I must observe, that the Learned Writer of this Essay has taken a great deal of needless Pains in endeavouring to shew that the Word *Certainty* is sometimes used in a lower Sense, than that in
which

which I have defined it, and so as to include all the different Degrees and Measures of Probability, and at the same time to confound and blend in one Word all the infinite Degrees of Evidence, from the highest down to the lowest. And tho' it is evident that the signification of the Word, when thus used, must be so general and indeterminate, as in effect to signify nothing at all, or to be capable of signifying any thing at pleasure; yet I acknowledge this improper use of the Word in a loose and popular way of speaking; and that in common Discourse, where no great matter depends upon it, *certain* is often put for *probable*. So that when this Author quotes Scripture against me, and Philosophizes in his own Way, he opposes not me, but an Adversary of his own making; and when he sets his School-boys upon me, to convince me by *Certus*, *Certior*, *Certissimus*, if he understands by certain only probable, and his Lads mean no more (as they ought not, if he instructs them right) than probable, more probable, most probable, he is contending for nothing but what I had yielded. But thus it is to fall under the Resentments of a School-master; for tho' I could not be ignorant of this frequent inaccurate use of Words in common Speech, and therefore observed that Certainty, in a loose and popular way of speaking, was often put for Probability, and Certain for Probable; yet I thought it necessary to fix the Boundaries of strict and proper Certainty, so as to distinguish it from all those infinite Degrees of Probability below it, with all which it is too often confounded

ded in the Argumentative Discourses of Learned Men, to the great advantage of Bigotry and Enthusiasm.

But the Author thinks he has found a single Instance, in which I have used the word *Certain* in a lower Sense than my own Definition of it will justify; *and he seems so well pleas'd with the Discovery, that he can hardly contain himself.* What he insists upon, is my saying, that you discover'd the same strength of Perswasion in what you were contending for, as if you were as certain, or had the same degree of Evidence, as that the Sun is up at Noon-day: Now he thinks that the Sun's being up at Noon-day is not strictly certain at all, so as to render the contrary impossible; and the Instances he gives to the contrary may afford the Reader some diversion, since they do not in the least imply, or suppose the possibility of the contrary. 'Tis true, God may create a Light at Mid-night, equal to the Light of the Sun at Noon, or Mid-day; but no body would say this would be Noon-day, since what we mean by Noon, or Mid-day, is, the Sun's being upon the upper part of the Meridian: So the Sun may be totally Eclipsed at Noon, in which case it might possibly be as dark as if it were Mid-night; yet still while the Sun is above the Horizon, and upon the Meridian, it must be Noon, or Mid-day. Again, God by his absolute Power might, if he pleased, retard or accelerate the apparent Motion of the Sun, or the real Motion of the Earth, so that from Noon to Noon it should be 48, or only 12 Hours; in which case we should say the Days
were

were miraculously lengthened, or shortened; yet still in this, or any other extraordinary Case, the Sun's coming to the Meridian above the Horizon, must make what we call Noon, or Mid-day: So that our Idea of Noon must have a necessary Connexion with the Idea of the Sun upon the upper part of the Meridian; and nothing can alter the Idea of the one, but what must equally affect the Idea of the other. And therefore *M^r. Fancourt* may, if he pleases, let this stand as a Proposition certainly true, that the Sun is up, or upon the Meridian, at Noon-day; since for any thing I can see to the contrary, it must be so whether he will or no. I should not have troubled the Reader upon such a Trifle, had not this Author's Triumph made it in some measure necessary. But I am not willing to say any thing more on this part of his Performance, because I would not provoke this Gentleman to write an *Essay concerning the Sun*, or some deep *Reflections upon Noon-day*.

But let us hear this Author's own Account of Certainty, and which he gives us as what you your selves intended by it. He tells us therefore, That " there is an Objective, and " there is a Subjective Certainty: the former is no other than the real Truth and " Importance of a thing considered abstractly in it self; the latter is the firm Perswasion we have in our Minds concerning " its Truth or Importance. *He adds*, Now " the Certainty of which those Gentlemen " speak is Subjective only; which supposes " that the Judgment be actually formed, and

" 22

an indubitable Perswasion that the Judgment we have form'd is true; or (in their own words) the knowing we are in the right, p. 25. I think it must be evident to every one, that Certainty and Uncertainty, Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong, Doubtful or Indubitable, &c. are all of them Terms, and Ways of Speaking, taken from the Operations of the Mind, and the different Appearances of Things to the Understanding. And therefore to make any of these Distinctions in the absolute nature of things, abstracted from the Operations of the Mind, or the Acts of the Understanding, must be the grossest abuse of Words, or a talking without Ideas; there is nothing in the Things themselves absolutely consider'd but real Existence, and the necessary natural Relations they stand in to each other. Those who talk intelligibly, I suppose by Objective Certainty, mean, the Objective Evidence it self, or the Nature and Reason of Things, as they exist Objectively, and by their Ideas, in the Mind; and by Subjective Certainty, the actual Perception of the Nature and Reason of Things as they exist thus objectively in the Mind, or the perceived Relations of the Agreement or Disagreement of our own Ideas.

However, if the Author has been a little lost in his Objective, he runs into the very Wilds of Enthusiasm when he comes to his Subjective Certainty; for he defines it by indubitable Perswasion, and he tells me, that by Knowledge and Certainty, the Certainty of Knowledge, knowing you are in the Right, and such like Expressions in your Introduction.

on, you mean only that you are Strongly or Indubitably perswaded. If this be so, 'tis evident you must confound Seeing with Feeling; and that by being certain of a thing, you mean only that you hold it fast. Every one must see that there is no manner of Connexion betwixt Indubitable Perswasion, and the real Truth or Certainty of Things, since the Perswasion may be equally Strong and Indubitable, whether a Man be in the Right, or in the Wrong. This Certainty therefore of Indubitable Perswasion, is such a sort of Certainty, as a Man may have of the Existence of a Thing that does not exist, or of the Truth of what is absolutely false and contradictory.

But here the Author has two sorts of Certainty in one; for having defined Certainty by Indubitable Perswasion, and being aware that Indubitable Perswasion has nothing to do with the real Truth and Certainty of Things; and consequently, that his Definition had no relation to the Thing defined; he is forced to distinguish between Rational and Irrational Certainty, or between a Certainty with, and without sufficient Evidedce, i. e. between Certainty and no Certainty, Truth and Fallhood, Light and Darkness; which yet he includes under the common Name and Definition of Certainty. *A notable Account of Certainty indeed!* and a Distinction much of the same Nature with that of a Preacher, who having occasion to mention the Word *Perfectness*, told his Hearers that they ought to take notice there were two sorts

sorts of Perfectness, *namely, Perfectness and Unperfectness!*

His distinguishing between Certainty, with and without sufficient Evidence, while he confines the Notion of Certainty to Indubitable Perswasion, will afford him no Relief; for either Indubitable Perswasion must be Certainty in every one alike, or else his own Indubitable Perswasion must be the Rule and Measure of Certainty to the rest of Mankind; the latter, I presume, he will not say, and therefore Indubitable Perswasion must be Certainty in every one alike; which is to remove all the Boundaries between Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong, and to suppose that the most Contradictory things in the World may be equally True and Certain. If he should say, that by real Certainty, he means that Indubitable Perswasion which is well grounded, or built upon sufficient Evidence, wherever it is, whether in himself, or any Body else; as this would be going off from his own Account of the Matter, where he has placed Certainty in Indubitable Perswasion, as the very Nature and Definition of the Thing, so it would be saying nothing at all; for since the Question is where this true Indubitable Perswasion is to be found, and Men of equal Parts and Integrity have hitherto been divided about it in certain Points, it would not tend much to the Information of the World, to tell us, that the true Perswasion must be found where it is, or that he who is in the Right, is in the Right.

If your Defender has been unhappy in his Attempt to get rid of the Absurdity of an uncertain Certainty, by placing the Nature of Certainty in Uncertainty it self, or defining it by Indubitable Perswasion, which has no manner of Connexion with the real Truth and Certainty of Things; so by a like Device he endeavours to evade the Force of what I had said about strict and proper, i. e. Infallible Certainty. The Author by Infallibility, thinks fit to understand the Infallibility of the Intellectual Faculty, as abstracted from its Act and Object; or should I suppose, or grant all that he has advanced upon this Head to be both intelligible and true, as I doubt it is neither, yet it would not in the least affect any thing I have said. Could this Gentleman have made it out, that a Determination of the Judgment by Infallible Evidence, is not an Infallible Determination, or that those who have attain'd, in particular Cases, the certain infallible Knowledge of things, however they come by it, are not thus far Infallible, and very fit and proper Persons to be Infallible Guides to others: I say, could he have made this out, he had contradicted me, and shewn the Weakness of the Principle I argued from; but this he has not been able to do. However, when he had wrought himself up to Resolution, in Defence of his *special Relations*, to Write an Essay concerning Certainty and Infallibility, it was fit for him to say something, and it may not be amiss to consider what he has said.

The Foundation then of all that he has said concerning Infallibility, he gives us in these Words. " Not to contend about mere Words, give me leave to explain a little what I take to be your Brethren's Sense of an Infallible Judgment, when they declare they are far from pretending to such a Judgment about Gospel-Truth and Error. By the Judgment here, I suppose them to understand the *Determining Faculty it self*, and not any particular Determination of this Faculty; or (if you will) the very Power that Judges, and not any particular Judgments that are formed by this Power. And the Judgment is then Infallible, when it cannot be deceiv'd, or when it is impossible for it to determine wrong.

An Infallibility of Faculty in it self, or in its own abstract Nature, as distinct from any particular Determinations, must be an absolute unlimited Infallibility; since to say, that a Faculty Infallible in it self, or in its own Nature, as abstracted from all its particular Determinations, may yet in particular Cases determine Wrong, is a plain Contradiction; for if in particular Instances it may determine Wrong, the Reason of its Infallibility in other Cases must be sought for, not in the Faculty it self, but some where else; since it is evident that a Faculty cannot be infallible in its self or in its own abstract Nature, unless it is absolutely and universally so. This Author therefore has been so kind as to justify me, even while he is bringing one of his main Charges against me, *viz.* My having supposed

fed you to have disclaim'd no more than an absolute unlimited Infallibility.

But I must not dissemble a plain Truth, which is, that he immediately contradicts himself; for he has no sooner rais'd the fine Structure of Infallibility upon the Foundation of an abstract Faculty, but he presently pulls it down again with his own Hands; for he goes on thus. "It matters not in the Case before us, whether this Infallibility, (*viz.* the Infallibility of the Faculty) be natural, or acquir'd; whether it arises from the *Intrinsic Perfection of the Faculty*, which cannot but see things as they are, and determine accordingly; or from the overpowering Brightness of that objective or extrinick Evidence, which is sure to attend it, and to secure it against Mistakes in all its Determinations. It matters not, whether this Infallibility be Absolute and Unlimited, such as extends to every thing; or whether it be restrain'd to some particular Objects only: Whether if it be a constant and an abiding Quality, such as is never separated from the Judgment; or whether it be Occasional and Transient, enjoy'd at some certain Seasons only, and for some extraordinary Purposes. Yet still so far, and so long as the Judgment is infallible, I can't possibly, in such Things, and for that Time, be deceiv'd. But how comes it about that it matters not whether an Infallibility of the Faculty be an Infallibility of the Faculty or not? If it matters not whether this Gentleman differs from me or no, why does he pretend to differ?

differ ? Does he write Essays in mere Wantonness, or only to please his Friends and Benefactors ? The Sum of all that he here says, is this ; By the Judgment here I suppose your Brethren to understand the determining Faculty it self, abstracted from any particular Determination ; but then you must know that it matters not whether this Infallibility of the Faculty be an Infallibility of the Faculty, or an Infallibility of the Objective Evidence, or the Infallibility of the Extrinsic Means of conveying the Objective Evidence to the Mind, or any other sort of Infallibility : But 'tis enough, that so far, and so long as a Person is Infallible, he cannot in such Things, and for that Time be deceived : And tho' the Infallibility of the Faculty as such must extend to all the particular Determinations of that Faculty, yet it matters not whether this Infallibility be Limited, or Unlimited, Universal, or Restrain'd to some particular Objects only ; or, in one word, it matters not whether this Learned Writer talks Consistently, or Intelligibly, or no, provided he does but seem to differ from me.

But the Author finds himself so much at a loss in fixing his Idea of Infallibility, that having first placed it in the Faculty, and then supposed that it matters not whether it is placed in the Faculty or no, he runs from the Faculty to the Object, to the Evidence, to the External Assistance, &c. and brings it at length to this sure Conclusion, that so far as the Judgment is Infallible, it is Infallible, or cannot err. If he could have shewn that an Infallible Determination of the Judgment could

could be made in any Case without the Perception of Infallible Evidence, he had contradicted me, and said something to his Purpose; but since he has left this untouch'd, I am not at all concerned in any of his fine Speculations about the Infallibility of Abstract Faculties. I was not Writing an Essay concerning Infallibility, and did not pretend to consider all the Grounds and Reasons upon which an Agent, with regard to his Faculties, actual Determinations, and outward Assistances, might be denominated Infallible. It was enough for me to shew what was necessary and sufficient to constitute an Infallible Guide; and all that is here necessary, I suppose to be the Certain Infallible Knowledge of the Way, however the Person comes by it, whether he found it out by an Infallible Faculty, or receiv'd it by Revelation: Or, lastly, whether he came by his Infallible Certainty in the Exercise of his own Natural Faculties, in which he might have err'd, but did not. If a Man, tho' by Chance, or mere Accident, should hit upon a certain Infallible Rule to determine the Longitude, I suppose it might answer the Purpose, as well as if it had been sent directly from Heaven, or found out by an Infallible Faculty. He who has the certain Infallible Knowledge of a Disputable Point, in which others cannot obtain such Certainty, and appears also to be a Man of Uprightness and Integrity, is doubtless qualify'd for an Infallible Guide to others; and no body would scruple to receive, and own him as such, who takes it for granted, or once believes that he has that Infallible Certain
Know-

Knowledge in the Case which he pretends to. And this is all the Infallibility that Mankind are, or ever have been concern'd in, with Respect to Infallible Guides, or Teachers.

The Miracles upon which the Truth of the Christian Religion is founded, were wrought to prove; not the Infallibility of the Apostles Faculties, but the certain infallible Truth of the Doctrines they taught; and tho' the Apostles might possibly have err'd, or been mistaken, concerning any supernatural Revelation made to them in it self considered; yet since they had the Power of working Miracles given them to confirm the Truth of the Doctrines they had receiv'd; and since also it was impossible that God should set his Seal to a Lie, or suffer any false Doctrine to be confirmed by such numerous Miracles, without controuling them by a superior Power; from hence the Apostles had as infallible a Knowledge, or Certainty of the Truth of the Doctrines, as they could have of their own Existence, and the Being of a God; and it was plainly from this Infallible Objective Evidence of Miracles, proving the infallible Truth and Certainty of the Doctrines, that Christianity grew and prevail'd, and that the Apostles were receiv'd as infallible Teachers; and not from any supposed Metaphysical abstract Infallibility of the Apostles Faculties. Now it was a strict and proper Certainty, as distinguished from bare Belief, Opinion, or Perswasion, and which as thus distinguished, will be always infallible Certainty, which I apprehended you to have claim'd; and because the Author charges me with a gross, if not
B
will

willful Misrepresentation of your plain Words in this Case, I shall here recall this Matter to a farther Examination.

The Passage which I am so warmly charged with, as having perverted and misrepresented, is in your *Introduction*, p. 5. Where you say "we are far from pretending to an infallible Judgment about Gospel-Truth and Error, but we take it to be an agreed Point with *Protestants*, that their may be Certainty where there is not Infallibility; and none can deny this, unless they will venture to assert, that we can in no Case know we are in the Right, but by being assur'd that it is impossible for us, in any Case, to be in the Wrong". In this Passage I did indeed suppose that by Certainty, and knowing we are in the Right, you understood the Words Certainty and Knowledge in a strict and proper Sense, as distinguished from bare Belief, Opinion, or Perswasion; upon which Supposition all that I said about it must have been the just and necessary Consequences of the Principle it self; and the Reason I had to understand you so, was, because I saw that the Words taken in any other Sense must render all you here say perfectly trifling and insignificant; and I could not well imagine that Learned Men, in an argumentative Discourse, and when they seemed to be laying down a general Principle, intended to say just nothing. But I am now told that by Certainty, knowing you are in the Right, Certainty of Knowledge, and such like Expressions, you mean only Belief, or Opinion; that you firmly believe, or are indubitably perswaded. I must
here

here observe by the way, that dubitable or indubitable, when join'd with Belief or Perswasion, do not in the least affect the real Truth or Existence of things ; a Man may be in the Right where he has great Doubts or Scruples in his Mind whether he is in the Right or not ; as he may be in the Wrong where his Perswasion is most strong and indubitable : And indeed the Strength and Indubitableness of the Perswasion in Matters of a doubtful and disputable Nature, is generally owing more to the Force of *Enthusiasm* and vain Confidence, than to the Clearness of the real objective Evidence. However I shall not stand with you in this Point, but readily grant you all the Strength and Indubitableness of Perswasion you can desire ; and since by Certainty you mean only indubitable Perswasion, and by knowing, only believing you are in the Right, I shall substitute the one for the other ; and then what you say is this ; “ We
 “ are far from pretending to an infallible
 “ Judgment about Gospel-Truth and Error,
 “ but we take it to be an agreed Point with
 “ *Protestants*, that there may be an indubita-
 “ ble Perswasion, where there is not Infalli-
 “ bility ; and none can deny this, unless they
 “ will venture to assert, that we can in no
 “ Case firmly believe we are in the Right,
 “ but by being assured that it is impossible
 “ for us in any Case to be in the Wrong.

It would indeed be very strange if *Protestants* and all Mankind should not be agreed in this, that there may be a firm Belief or indubitable Perswasion, where there is not Infallibility, or even the least Truth or common

Sense. The Zealots of all Parties are generally so firm and indubitable in their different and contrary Perswasions, as to put this Matter beyond all Doubt; and he must certainly be a very bold Man who should venture to assert, that we can in no Case believe we are in the Right, without being assured that it is impossible for us in any Case to be in the Wrong. It will be to no Purpose to say that you suppose your indubitable Perswasion to be well grounded; for since this is essential to all Belief or Perswasion whatever, and no one can believe any thing at all without supposing he has sufficient Reason for it; and since also there is no more Connexion betwixt your indubitable Perswasion and the real Truth of Things, than betwixt that of *another Man's* to the contrary; all that you can bring your indubitable Perswasion to, is only this, that as it may possibly be right, so it may as possibly be wrong. My great Crime then, it seems, is that I have presum'd to understand your Words in the only Sense of of which they are capable, without supposing you to trifle and talk unintelligibly. But since your Defender has thought convenient to explain your Meaning into nothing, I am content to leave it there till you shall be pleased to let us know, whether you intended to be understood in any Sense at all or not.

You endeavour, *p. 8.* to obviate an Objection which you apprehended might naturally arise from your Way of talking, or from that Air of strict and proper, *i. e.* infallible Certainty, which runs through your whole Discourse. You say, "perhaps it will be said, tho

“ tho’ Men may be allowed to argue and rea-
 “ son one with another in such Points as
 “ these, yet they should not be positive nor
 “ importunate, they should forbear Admoni-
 “ tion and Reproof, which looks like assum-
 “ ing an Authority over their Brethren, and
 “ accusing the other Side of Dulness or Ob-
 “ stinacy”; you might have added of Here-
 “ sy and damnable Error.

Now to this Objection you immediately
 reply, that “ indeed as for those that are not
 “ yet arrived at *such a Certainty of Knowledge*
 “ and Faith in this great Doctrine, it would
 “ be very improper for them to press it so
 “ earnestly upon others; they ought first to
 “ be well perswaded in their own Minds: But
 “ if the Doctrine be true, it is possible it may
 “ be known to be true, and those that know
 “ it to be so, may be allow’d to tell others
 “ what they believe, both of the Truth and
 “ Importance of it; and this may be done
 “ without Vain-glory in themselves, or un-
 “ charitable Contempt of those that are o-
 “ therwise minded”. Here you seem to di-
 “ stinguish betwixt the highest Sort of Evidence,
 viz. Certainty of Knowledge, and those low-
 er Proofs and Appearances of Probability,
 which you would call Certainty of Faith; and
 if you do not here make this Distinction, by
 the Certainty of Knowledge and Faith, you
 must mean only the Certainty of Faith and
 Faith, or the firm Belief of indubitable Per-
 swasion and indubitable Perswasion. The
 plain Design of this Passage is to lead the
 Reader into an Opinion that there are some
 Persons who are arriv’d to such a Certainty
 of

of Knowledge and Faith in the most involv'd and perplex'd Points relating to the Trinity, as to justify them in declaring others who are not of their Mind to be under a damnable Error, and out of the Christian Way of Salvation. I have not met with one single Person, of what Perswasion soever, but has thus understood it; and if this is not the plain Import and Intent, not only of this Passage, but this whole *Introduction*, I might defy any Man living to put any Sense or Meaning at all to it.

It is easy to guess who the Persons are that have here advanced themselves as the sole rightful indubitable Guides of implicit Believers; but if I should ask you in good earnest, who, and where those Persons are, who upon this Certainty of Knowledge and Faith, are justifiable in affixing the Sanctions of eternal Life and Death to the most doubtful and difficult Points, in which Men of the greatest Capacity and Integrity could never agree, you could only say that they are those who are in the Right; and since you have no other Mark to distinguish them by but their own indubitable Perswasion, they must in your Scheme be all those who are indubitably perswaded that they are in the Right, in any Matter which they think of great Importance; that is, all the warm positive Zealots in the whole Christian World, of what Opinion, Party, or Perswasion soever.

Thus it is when Men, not content with the plain express Declarations of the Word of God, concerning what is, or is not necessary to Salvation, go about to establish their own
Opinions

Opinions and Conceits upon very obscure Texts, or remote Consequences, and thereby make every thing necessary to Salvation and Christian Communion, which they find most agreeable to their Prejudices, Passions, or Interests, or think most proper to be made the Mark and *Shibboleth* of a Party. But because the Writer of the *Reflections* lays me under an Imputation, as having impeached you for Uncharitableness without sufficient Grounds, I shall consider this Matter a little farther; how well you may be able to clear your selves in this Point, when you shall condescend effectually to set about it, I cannot say; but I believe most People must think your Second a little unlucky in the Passage he has quoted from you to vindicate your Charity.

The Passage he is pleased to quote, is in your *Introduction*, p. 10. " If indeed this
 " zealous Friend of mine should make use of
 " carnal Weapons to conquer my Unbelief,
 " I shall soon discern that, whether I be in
 " the Right or in the Wrong, he has mistaken
 " the Nature of the Case, and acted
 " without Authority from God; nay, if he
 " should pass a Sentence of Condemnation
 " upon me, I shall have Reason to conclude
 " he has transgressed the Bounds of his Commission;
 " since nothing is more certain than
 " that every Man's Judgment is from the
 " Lord, and to his own Master he must stand
 " or fall; and how far, and in what Cases, the
 " infinite Mercy of God may interpose and
 " prevent those pernicious Effects which such
 " an Error deserves, and would naturally
 " produce, if left to it self, are Secrets only
 " known

known to God the Judge of all, who is the
 wise and sovereign Disposer of his own
 Grace; but still the *Moral Nature and De-*
 merit of such an Error remains to be what
 it was. Either this Case of *damnable Error*,
 and of Men being in a State of Damnation
 from the *Moral Nature and Demerit* of the
 Doctrines they maintain, was intended by
 you to be apply'd to your Brethren, as differ-
 ing from you in the disputable Point rela-
 ting to the Trinity, or it was not; if it was
 not, your placing it here, and seeming to ap-
 ply it as you do, is such a Piece of Injustice as
 I care not to name; since it could serve only
 to betray the believing Reader into an Opini-
 on that those you plainly aim at, are guilty of
 that damnable Error which yet you do not
 suppose them to be guilty of, and dared not
 directly to charge them with; but if you in-
 tended, as I think it is most evident you did,
 to apply the Case to your Brethren as differing,
 or supposed to differ from you in the present
 disputable Points concerning the Trinity, I
 fear you are in this place invading the Prero-
 gative of Almighty God, applying the Sancti-
 ons of eternal Life and Death to wrong Pur-
 poses, without the least Authority from your
 great Lord and Master, and passing a Sentence
 of Damnation upon your innocent Brethren,
 as much as any anathematizing Council, or
 hereticating Creed-Makers, in the Christian
 World have ever done; and that consequent-
 ly your unjust Charge upon your Brethren,
 as guilty of damnable Error in this Point,
 and your framing and applying humane Tests
 as the Engines of Bigotry and Party-Rage, to
 exclude

exclude Men from the Communion of Saints, and the Benefits of the Christian Covenant upon this Foundation, must in you, be the same sort of persecuting Zeal, Imposition, and unchristian Tyranny, which you have always blamed, and have been as forward as any to condemn in the *Papists*, and High-church-men.

I suppose every one of you will grant me this Principle, that for Men to make new fundamental Articles of Faith, and declare any thing as necessary to Salvation and Church Communion, that Christ has not made so; and upon this Foundation to exclude their Fellow Christians from their special Fellowship and Communion, and from the Benefits of the Christian Covenant, is the very Essence of Uncharitableness, Persecution, and Church Tyranny. Whether the coercive Power of the Magistrate be annex'd to this spiritual Tyranny or not, is a Matter of little Consequence in the Case before us; since for a Man to be branded as an Heretick, to be marked out for Reprobation, to be debarred the Institutions of the Gospel, and deny'd the Benefits of the Christian Covenant, purely for Conscience sake, and because he cannot believe or declare his Belief of the Truth or Necessity of what the Scripture has not made such, is a Treatment as much more cruel and antichristian than the inflicting any corporal Punishments, as the Interests of the Soul and another World are more valuable than those of this present Life: And he who is debar'd from the Institutions of the Gospel, deny'd the special Love and Fellowship of Christians, and Benefits of the Christian Covenant, merely for not declaring his Belief of what God has either not revealed, or but darkly and obscurely revealed, and not made necessary to Salvation, is as truly persecuted, imposed on, and subjected to an antichristian Power, as if he was fined, imprisoned, or put to Death. I thought it the more necessary to state

aright the Notion of Persecution, Imposition, and antichristian Tyranny, since I find Men very often ready to wipe their Lips in this Case, and ask what Evil have we done, only because they do not, *when perhaps they cannot*, enforce their humane uncertain Decisions and unscriptural Tests, with the coercive Power of the Civil Magistrate.

Nothing you say is more certain than this, that every Man's Judgment is from the Lord, and to his own Master he must stand or fall; and therefore you do not indeed pretend to pass any such Sentence of Damnation as God himself may not reverse, either by bringing the Person to Repentance and a Sight of his Error, or by extending Mercy to him in some extraordinary way. You have not, I must own, pretended to limit the sovereign Grace and prerogative Mercy of God, or to put your Brethren and Fellow Christians into any such State of Damnation, as not to leave it in the Power of God to save them.

How far, and in what Cases the *Infinite Mercy* of God may interpose and pervert those pernicious Effects which such an *Error deserves*, and would naturally produce if left to it self, *are Secrets*, you say, *only known to God* the Judge of all, who is the wise and sovereign Disposer of his own Grace; and I beseech you, *Gentlemen*, where are those antichristian Synods, or hereticating Creed-Makers, that have ever pretended to reveal those Secrets, or to determine any thing at all of the Matter more than you have done? All that they have done has been only to affix the Sanctions of Eternal Life and Death to their own fallible uncertain Decisions, and mere humane unscriptural Tests; and how little soever you may like such Company, I doubt you will find it somewhat difficult to get rid of it.

If these Censures and Imputations of damnable Error, are not designed against those of your Brethren and Fellow Christians who have different

Appre-

Apprehensions from you in the disputable Points relating to the Trinity ; all that you can say here can be to no Purpose, unless it is to fix upon them a Charge of the most criminal Nature, which you do not your selves believe them to be guilty of; but if they are thus design'd, as 'tis plain they are, I fear you have drawn a Weight upon your selves, which you will not easily remove; since you have laid your selves under a strong Imputation of having enforced the Belief of your own doubtful and false Speculations, under the Penalty of eternal Damnation ; of making that to be fundamental, which Christ has never made so ; and declaring a thing to be necessary to Salvation, which God has no where declared to be so much as true.

All the Foundation you have for these unmerciful Censures, and Charges of damnable Error against your Christian Friends and Brethren, is, that they think the *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* to be really distinct from, and subordinate to the *Father*; since they cannot otherwise understand the Scriptures, or suppose that there is any Revelation at all from God, made to the Understandings of Men in those Matters. And this real Distinction, and real Subordination of the Persons, is what you your selves cannot evade or deny, without confounding the Persons, losing the Trinity, and falling directly into *Sabellianism*; that is, into *Socinianism* on the one hand; or, on the other Side, multiplying the necessary Self-Existence, and making Three Gods in the highest Sense of the Word, or Three absolutely Supreme, Independent, First Causes of all Things. I hope therefore you will forbear your Censures for the future, and be more charitable towards your Brethren and Fellow Christians, 'till you can shew that your Orthodoxy must not terminate in *Socinianism* on the one hand, or *Tritheism* on the other; and when you have done this, I dare engage to reconcile to you all the reputed *Arians* in the Kingdom.

The main Position upon which you have laid the mighty Stress, and which has been made the great Engine of our late Divisions, ought never to be forgotten; and I thank the Author of these *Reflections* for giving me this Opportunity to remind you a little farther of it. Your peculiar Test then against Hereticks is this; that the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and not either of these alone, is the one true God, or the one supreme Being. Now if this be so, that the Three Persons conjunctly, and neither of the Three alone are the one true God, then you must say either that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not the one true God, or else that Jesus Christ is his own God and Father. I leave it to your Choice which you will take; but both of them, I think, you cannot avoid. You endeavour to shew that the Nature and Definition, the Essence and all the essential Attributes of the one true God, belong equally to each Person distinctly; that is, that whether you use the Words *Father*, *Son*, *Holy Ghost*, or one true God, your Ideas are respectively and precisely the same: And nothing can be more egregiously trifling, than to say, that to the Idea of the Father, we must add the Idea of the Son, and the Idea of the Holy Ghost, to compleat the Idea of the One True God; when it does not appear from any thing you have said, that you have any distinct and different Ideas at all, when you pronounce those distinct and different Sounds. If you have any different or distinct Ideas in your Minds when you pronounce those different Sounds, *Father*, *Son*, *Holy Ghost*, one true God, you may, and let me add, you ought in Honour and Justice to let us know what those different Ideas are; but if you have no such, all that you say is only this, that the one true God, the one true God, and the one true God, and not either of these alone, are the one true God; or, which amounts to the same thing, that the one true God, the one true God, and the one true God, is, and is not, the one true God.

If

If you can shew that you have any different and distinct Meaning to the several Terms you make use of, I hope you will think your selves obliged to do it; if you cannot, the Proposition as I have put it must be your own. I am sorry you should endeavour to impeach your Brethren as Hereticks, and distract the Minds of the Christian People, only on the Account of one mere Verbal Proposition, which you your selves understand, either in no Sense at all, or which is equally unhappy for you, in a Sense you dare not own.

But having been *called up*, as you say, after an extraordinary manner to defend the Truth, you thought fit to arise in great Fury, and to State, or rather Involve the Point in one Impenetrable Piece of Darkness, and then calmly to sit down, and declare you intend to explain your selves no farther. I must not ease you of this Trouble, till I have adjusted one Account more, which still remains betwixt me and the Author of these Reflections, with regard to three Self-contradictions he has charged upon me.

The first Contradiction he charges me with, is, my having supposed the Possibility of Communicating all the Infinite Divine Attributes and Perfections, by an Eternal Act of Generation from God the Father to God the Son, and yet my affirming it to be Impossible and Contradictory, to suppose that any Infinite Divine Perfection should be communicated to Man, or any mere Creature whatever: But these two are so perfectly Reconcilable and Consistent, that I must beg his farther Help before I can see any thing of a Contradiction betwixt them.

2. He says that the Necessity of being actually in the Right, is what I have both asserted and deny'd; and 'tis true that I have so, in different Cases, and under different Relations and Qualifications of the Objects; and those different Respects and Qualifications of Truths and Objects, which

which I refer'd to, must have been visible to every Body but this Author: He could not imagine that I supposed it not necessary to be in the Right, where the Truth is so evident in it self, or so clearly and expresly revealed, as to have a necessary inseparable Connexion with Sincerity, so as that a sincere Enquirer cannot miss it. But I suppose it not necessary to be in the Right, where it is impossible to be so, or where after the most sincere Enquiry the Person may be mistaken, and not be able to discover the Truth. And 'tis the Necessity of being actually in the Right in these doubtful and disputable Cases, that has troubled the World so much, and the Bigots of all Parties so strenuously insist upon.

3. Certainty in Matters of Faith is what he charges upon me, as having both asserted and deny'd: Deny'd, where I say that they must be very weak Protestants, if there be any such who talk of Certainty in Matters of Faith; and asserted, as he would have it, where I say, that doubtless, or as he explains it for me with an *i. e.* certainly, the Apostles were Infallible in whatever they delivered as the Mind and Will of God, &c. But why must Doubtless be strictly the same with Certainly? Tho' this Author is certain of every Thing he does not doubt of, I do not pretend to it. I do not doubt but he had some Design or other in making such Objections, tho' I am not certain of it. I am not Strictly and Properly, *i. e.* Infallibly Certain that there were ever any such Men as the Apostles, tho' I believe it upon sufficient Evidence. I have never, that I know of, confounded a bare Belief or Perswasion with Knowledge or Certainty, and why should this Gentleman charge his own Absurdities upon me.

And now, after all, if Mr. *Fancourt* has not been able to fix any Self-contradiction upon me, it is plainly none of his Fault, since he has not spared his kind Endeavours; he has put on his Armour,
enter'd

enter'd the Lists, and bid Defiance like a Champion; and if he has not answered the Expectations of the Publick, or in any Measure executed his Threatnings, he has however done his best, and you are to take his Endeavours in good part.

But, if Mr. *Fancourt* should be prevail'd upon to publish the Second Part, which he has promised under the Title of *An Essay concerning Implicit Faith*; I would advise him, for his own sake, to spare his Raillery, and keep close to the Argument.

Upon the whole, I cannot help believing that you have acted an Imposing Part in this Affair, and carried your Exhortations beyond the Bounds of Christian Charity; that you have substituted your own Uncertain Decisions, and Incomprehensible Speculations, in the place of Scripture, and enforced them with those Spiritual and Divine Sanctions, which can belong only to the Laws of Christ in their Original Plainness and Simplicity; and that by setting up Humane Tests, as the Standards of Divine Faith, and endeavouring to work upon the Judgments and Passions of the People, by those Engines of Bigotry and Darkness, you have, however undesignedly, contributed not a little to bring the Scriptures into Disuse and Contempt; as if they were not in themselves sufficiently express and clear, and consequently no sufficient Rule of Faith, even in things necessary: And hereby you have, I fear, considerably wounded and weakened that truly Catholick and Christian Charity, that Just and Equitable Liberty of Conscience, and that strict Regard to the Authority of God alone, which are the Life and Glory of Christianity, 'Tis true, you drop here and there a Passage, as disclaiming all External Compulsive Force in Matters of Religion; and tho' I do not pretend to enter into your Hearts, or to say how far a Change of Circumstances might alter your Sentiments in this Particular, yet I cannot

not

not but think, that since you have discovered in all other Respects the true Spirit of Persecution, Imposition, and Church Tyranny, that Man must have a strong Faith, or a weak Understanding, who should trust to your Clemency, had you that Legal Force in your Hands, which you now disclaim while 'tis out of your Power. Whoever observes your manner of discanting, with regard to Mr. Emlyn's Case in Ireland, will not I believe entertain any great Opinion of your intire Aversion to all Compulsive Force in these Matters; and your attributing the Visible Success of that *Secret Treachery*, join'd with *open Violence and Compulsion*, to the Blessing of God attending the Labours of a Reverend Brother, is such a Solemn Piece of Mockery, as one can hardly be serious upon, and which yet ought not to be laughed at.

After all, if you will, from any Just and Clear Reasonings, make it appear that I have mistaken the Point; that your Zeal in this Case is according to Knowledge; and that you have insisted upon nothing as necessary, but what Christ has plainly made so in the Constitution of his Gospel; I promise to Retract all that I have said upon this Score; and shall be so far from thinking it a Disgrace, that I shall rejoyce in a clearer Light, and be glad of any Opportunity to shew how readily I can sacrifice what is commonly thought a Point of Reputation, to the superior Interest of Truth, whenever it shall be propos'd with sufficient Evidence to my Understanding.

I am, Gentlemen, &c.



F I N I S.